

NEWSLETTER



Serving Task Force Warrior, the men from 1/12th Infantry Regiment, B Battery 4/42nd Artillery and B Co. 4th Engineers - 4th Infantry Division 1966-1070 - www.Redwarriors.us

Battle Reports Reveal Good, Bad, Ugly

Three Red Warrior battle Reports currently available on our website

Hill 875

The Battle for Hill 875, one of the worst battles in all of Vietnam War, was fought near Dak To during a major effort by the NVA to penetrate the entire region. The 173rd Brigade bore the brunt of the fighting but the conflict was so intense that they sought help from the 4th Division's Red Warriors, who were called in to assist in the final assault of Hill 875.

You can read the account of [Hill 875 in our History Diaries](#).

A 22 minute documentary DVD of the Red Warriors involvement with Hill 875 is also [available from our PX](#). The DVD was shown during our 2010 reunion St. Louis.



Three Battle Reports on-line

There are currently three battle reports on our Website. First, Battalion Commander Harold Birch (Aug. 67-Jan. 68) summarizes the battle that took place on July 12, 1967. This was the worst battle in terms of casualties for the Red Warriors and one where Red Warriors were taken as POWs

Almost two years later, on May 27, 1969, Charlie Company found itself mired in an intense battle. This notable fight resulted in our Battalion Commander, LTC Robert Carter being killed. He was the highest ranking Red Warrior killed in Vietnam. For this second report, Red Warrior, Jim Daniels, summarizes the events of that fateful day.

Less than two weeks later, Delta Company, on June 5, 1969, found itself also fighting the same NVA unit. Later in the battle, Charlie Company entered the fray.

Delta Company Commander, Larry Boyd, wrote the detailed account of what happened that day. ([See Battle Report](#))

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July Message from the Association Prez - Herb Taylor

To all fellow Red Warriors,

Have you made your reservations for the 2016 Reunion in San Diego yet and if not why are you waiting? The Reunion planners have done a great job in setting this reunion up and we are convinced it will one of the best yet! For me the highlight every reunion is getting to once again rub elbows and swap stories with my brothers in arms. If you have attended previous reunions you will know precisely of which I speak. If you have never attended, then it is time to get in on the fun and comradeship!

At this time, I wish to update all fellow RWs with the goings on of the officers and board members of the Red Warriors Vietnam Association. Effective with the close of the 2016 Reunion, Tim Swan is stepping down as Treasurer of the Association. At this time, we thank Tim for serving as our Treasurer for the past few years. His dedication to the RW's is deeply appreciated and I am not sure how to really thank him for his meticulous record keeping and efforts regarding the handling of reunion registrations.

With Tim's announcement of his intent, Mr. John Beckman has stepped forward and exhibited his willingness to become the Treasurer effective at the close of the 2016 reunion. John has been approved by the RW Officers and Board so at this time we are announcing his appointment as Treasurer. We applaud John's willingness to take on the Treasurer responsibilities. Thank you very much John!

Also effective with the close of the 2016 Reunion, both Dave Kraft and Cliff Shaver have tendered their resignation from the Board. Not sure how to really thank Dave for all he has done for us over the past years. He is a great sounding board on issues and he willingly transports our guidons to every reunion. We also thank Cliff for his efforts on the board. He is like a silent partner until an issue arises that he can wade in on and his advice is always on target and extremely beneficial to all of the officers.

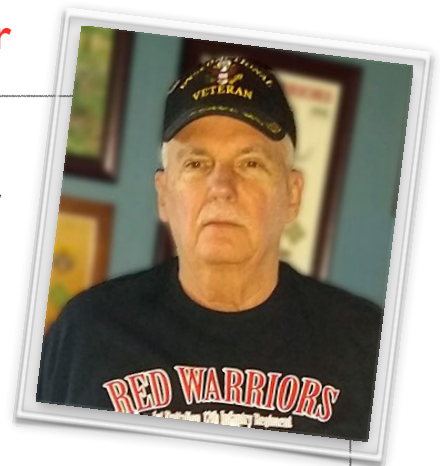
With full consent of the board, we have appointed Dennis Witt and Jim Hunt to the board and they will assist with future RW business as we go forward to our next reunion. Again, we express our sincere thanks to Dennis and Jim. They will be extremely helpful moving forward.

In closing, we again are appealing to all RWs that have not registered for the upcoming reunion to do so now. Registrations will cut off as of August 31, so quit procrastinating, and get your checks or money orders in to Tim Swan. We need to work Tim hard for the next few weeks handling all the reservations! You will be happy you decided to register and attend, we GUARANTEE IT!

Sincerely,

Herb Taylor

President - Red Warrior Vietnam Association



Reunion 2016



If you have not already registered for the October 2016 Red Warrior reunion in San Diego, California, now is the time to do so. The deadline to send in your registration form is August 31.

What can you expect if you have never attended a reunion? Well, we can pretty much guarantee you will go home feeling renewed pride in your Vietnam tour of duty. It's truly a therapeutic and a healthy emotional experience.

Will you know someone? You can [check our web page](#) for a list of those attending, but take it from this writer, it really does not matter. Everyone in Nam was in the same boat and we all can identify with each other. We are all brothers once we are at the reunion.

Over 5000 men served in the battalion from 1967 to 1970. If you find a long lost buddy, great! But if not, don't worry. You will be amazed at the common friendships that you will make. It really is an experience that you and your guest will cherish. The trick is not to be shy, just go up to a man in the same Red Warrior T-shirt (everyone gets one) and start a conversation. You will be off and running.

Registration information is on our website. [Registration Page](#) Deadline drawing near!



Honor Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Red Warriors presented a wreath during the 2012 Reunion. [Watch video](#)



Past Reunion Snapshots

See previous reunion photos on our [Photo Archive page](#)



Red Warrior Website 10 years old - how it started



In 2004 Mike Willenbecher of Alpha Company (2nd platoon/1st squad), 68-69) was trying to locate some of the men he'd served with. His wife, Del, found the 4th Division's message board and several men from the 1/12th suggested that Mike get in touch with Roger Hill. Mike did and Roger sent a bound booklet with the unit's history, the diary and a roster for Alpha Co.



*Del Willenbecher
Webmaster & Historian*



*Mike Willenbecher - Alpha
Company 1968/69*

Mike and Del thought it would be phenomenal for this information to be on the Web. Roger said that was one of his goals but he didn't have the skill to do it. Neither did Mike or Del but along with Roger they prepared a proposal for a class at Temple University to take it on as a class project. The proposal was accepted and the first version of www.RedWarriors.US was made public in May 2006, a decade ago. The website has evolved significantly since it was first introduced, primarily thanks to the efforts of Jim Daniels. Del continues to maintain the online roster (and promises to be more timely!)



*Roger Hill -
Our first RW
Historian*

Del and Mike live in College Park, PA, just a few hours from the National Archives, so Del drove down on a few occasions to get copies of archived reports. She sent these on to Roger who used them to fill in gaps in the War Diary and the battle reports he developed. She copied or photographed every document and several maps that were in the 1/12th Vietnam era boxes at the Archives.

Del hopes to get back to the National Archives one of these days to get digital copies of additional reports. She would also like to get to the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis for copies of rosters and Morning

Your Old Materials sought - We Really need them

Reports so we can have a more comprehensive roster.

On that note, if anyone has a copy of any material – reports, rosters, OR/LLs, GOs , Promotions, or anything else – please send a copy to Del. We are beginning to get copies of original documents onto the website. Be aware that many reports from back then have social security numbers on them. That detail will be deleted from anything we post. Any materials you have are important to us.

You can contact Del through Del@RedWarriors.US.



Battle Reports - continued from page 1

"I could hear the NVA around me, still firing. I began to crawl out and I had to pull my right bootlace to drag my leg along so it wouldn't rip off. I began calling for help. I heard a voice, and I crawled out of the elephant grass and hoped I could make it before the NVA got me. As I cleared the grass, there were two men. One put down his weapon, grabbed me and carried me over his shoulder while the other fellow carried his weapon and mine. I guess we traveled about another 100 yards until we got to the perimeter."

Willy Massel - C Company - describing his situation on May 27, 1969.

Each of these reports include testimonies, and maps of the battle area and battalion radio logs, such as the one above, from those who were involved in the battle.

Red Warrior Roger Hill has written extensive reports of battles for 11-13 Nov 1966; 15 Feb 1967; and 12 July 1967. His reports are over 100 pages in length. The are, however, currently unavailable for purchase as he's working on European copyright protection. We hope they will become available in the near future.

Tools of the trade



Charlie Company's Joe Yazzie designed our Red Warrior logo

In 1967 Joe Yazzie, a Navajo, found himself assigned to Charlie Company, 1st platoon. During his tour he tinkered with drawing and painting designs on sand bags. Returning home in 1967, he, like many Vietnam veterans, found readjustment to civilian life difficult. He recalls it was a rough period.



Artist Joe Yazzie



Joe says he's proud to be a Red Warrior, and as a Navajo, the "Warrior" designation of our battalion has special significance.

Yazzie is a special man, a special Red Warrior. To learn more about Joe, you can link this [Video](#) of Joe talking about his life, artwork and his many accomplishments.

Years would go by until Joe's artistic talents bore fruit. Today he is an award winning artist. You can see some of his artwork on our [PX Page](#).



In 2014 he attended his first Red Warrior reunion in Washington, D.C. Impressed, he began to design us a logo during his spare time. The result is the logo you see above and that is seen throughout our website.

In addition, he's designed the new Red Warrior t-shirt. The t-shirts will be issued to all Red Warriors who attend the 2016 reunion in San Diego





Friends in high places

It was close to Veterans Day 1967 when President Johnson paid a visit to Ft. Benning, Georgia. A young OCS candidate, Dennis Larkin, offered a smart salute to the Commander in Chief and the photo shows LBJ preparing his return salute.



Larkin would later go on to become Platoon Leader, 2nd Platoon of Charlie Company, 1969.

Veterans Day 1967 - LBJ visits an OCS Training Class at Ft. Benning, GA

Photo provided by Dennis Larkin

Reconnections - Time does not hinder old friendships

Recently we've gotten word of "reconnections" where Red Warriors have gotten tin touch with fellow warriors that they hadn't heard from in many years.

Richard Dahlka recently discovered the Red Warrior Website. He served in C Company as RTO to LT Ross Irvin of 3rd platoon during the later few months of 1969. After getting in touch with us, we put him in touch with his old LT, and the two have had great homecoming conversations since.



Richard Dahlka

Jerry Rayala, 1st Platoon Charlie Company 1969/70 recently discovered one of his old squad members Don May. Together they were wounded in the same incident on January 30th, 1970. Their reunion again took the form of lengthy phone conversations.

Likewise, Kevin Watson of Bravo Company, 1966/67, also discovered the website for the first time and has enjoyed catching up on his Vietnam experience with Jim Daniels. He's now posted several of his photos in our Photo Archive Collections.

We remember this stuff...



C's Meal, Combat, Individual

- Left: Photo of Breakfast
- Left: Photo of Lunch
- Left: Photo of Dinner
- Left: Special Holiday Dinner

4's & 5's





A look back ... 1969

Help add to our collection of articles - For the latest edition, view by year: [1967](#) - [1968](#) - [1969](#)

A Day With Charlie Company

By SP4 Chuck Colgan

LZ ENGLISH — A brisk breeze swept across Charlie Company's night location as the first rays of sunlight broke through the triple canopy jungle.

For the last month, C Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division, has been pushing through the Monsoon-drenched slopes of the An Lao Valley, keeping the enemy off balance.

Platoon Leader Russ Irvin, of Mexico City, Mex., sat on his steel pot, heating a can of beans and franks. "Let's go boys," he yelled to his squad. "You'll miss the bus and be late for school."

"But, Mom, it's Saturday," came a reply from one of the many company comedians.

After everyone packed his gear, the troops moved out.

"You know I quit the Boy Scouts because I didn't like camping out in the woods," said Private First Class Andy Sotirak, of Pittsburgh, Pa., a new man with the unit.

"Hey, repo, how long ago did you leave home?" asked one of the old timers.

"Three weeks ago," rejoined the PFC.

"You mean you saw girls, drove a car, ate off real plates and took a shower in a real tub three weeks ago?"

"Yeah."

"Hey, Sarge, repo took a shower in a real tub three weeks ago."

"What's a tub?" the sergeant laughed.

After climbing two steep mountains and wading across a

swollen stream, the company point element made contact with an estimated North Vietnamese Army (NVA) company, dug in on top of a hill.

The M60 machinegunner worked his way up the front of the company and put down a base of fire while the rest of the company took up defensive positions. The medics advanced to make sure no one was hurt. The M79 men blasted the enemy position, and a young forward observer (FO), 1st Lieutenant Mike Dittiglio, of Detroit, called for artillery.

"Fire mission," he yelled into the radio. "Point element pinned down by small arms from the bad guys, north and east." The FO selected the battery and type of round he wanted and began calling it in.

"Smoke one round H.E. (high explosive)," the lieutenant demanded.

The smoke round was right on target, and the FO repeated the process as the ear-shattering explosion slammed into the hilltop.

"I'd hate to be under that," said Private First Class Richard Stanton, of Virginia Beach, Va. "Usually when we make contact, we just bring the world down on them. That's the only way to fight them right."

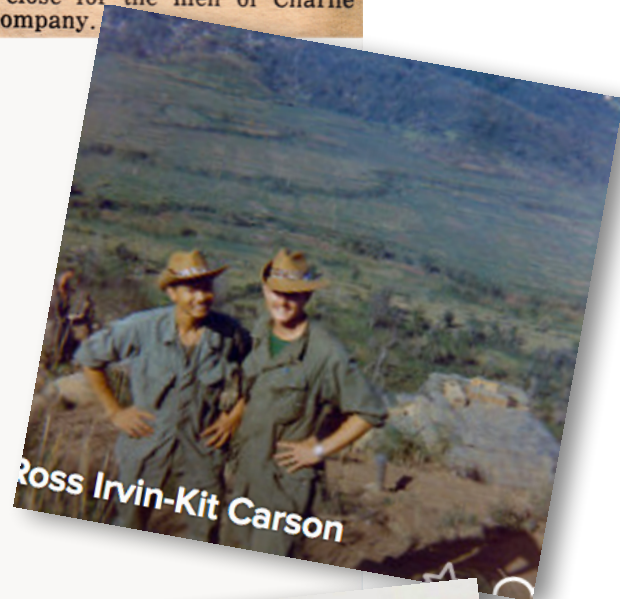
When the barrage of artillery was lifted, the men cautiously checked out the area and found the bodies of three NVA soldiers.

By then it was late in the afternoon and time to find a suitable night position. A nearby finger proved to be the safest spot.

The squad leaders walked around assigning nightly guard

duties. Medics passed out malaria pills and tended a variety of cuts, bruises and blisters.

A light drizzle fell as darkness set in, and another day drew to a close for the men of Charlie Company.



Ross Irvin-Kit Carson



Ivy Leaf article featuring Charlie Company in the An Lao Valley, October - November 1969. Photo above from LT Ross Irvin, 3rd Platoon Leader, showing him and his Kit Carson Scout. Photo below provided by Rick Dahlka, RTO for Irvin. The An Lao Valley clearly is shown in the background and home to LZ Tape

KIA Irving Pierce Jr., Charlie Company, Lies in Unmarked Grave



*Bob Harik
Photo Sleuth*

Our Volunteer Bob Harik of northern California has been searching for photographs of our Red Warriors killed in Vietnam. He's found well over 100 men. In searching for Irving Pierce Jr, of New Jersey, who was killed in a firefight on Sunday 11 February 1968 and died alongside PFC Arthur Hines of Grantville, GA and Michael Nemeth of South Amboy, ew Jersey. There were 25 WIA's in the action. In his search for a photograph, Harik stumbled upon something much more disturbing.

When Pierce arrived home, Harik discovered that at the time, the family could not afford a funeral. He was buried with military honors, but in an unmarked grave in the Gouldtown Memorial Park Cemetery in New Jersey. Since discovering that Pierce is not remembered with a tombstone, we've begun to help remedy the situation. We've learned that an application from the next of kin must be made with Veterans affairs. It is now in the hands of Irving's sister, Anna, who was 15 when her brother died. She has graciously provided a photo of her brother, which brings our number of missing Red Warrior photos to 17. We, as an organization, are going to help guide the family through this application process.



Irving Pierce Jr.

Events of this nature are not uncommon. Just last year in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, our own Terrance Sund of Bravo Company, was found. He was killed on 12 June, 1967 and his cremated remains had sat in a cemetery storage area until discovered in 2015. Again, his non-burial were the result of family members who could not afford a funereal. Last year he was given a full military honor burial after local VFW members got involved.

What began as a photographic search, has grown into a more important effort. We will help the family apply for his tombstone and that it is properly placed at his gravesite. Over 100 hours of searching by Bob has come to a rewarding conclusion. For Bob Harik, finding Pierce's photo is reward enough. Thanks Bob for your dedication!

NEED HELP? - NEW TO US? - CONTACT US!

IF YOU NEED TO CONTACT US, PLEASE REFERENCE AND CONTACT THE VOLUNTEERS BELOW

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Association President - Herb Taylor - herbandjan@gmail.com
 Association Secretary - Frank Wise - jmhwise@shentel.net
 Association Treasurer - Tim Swan - tpswan@charter.net

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Pop Smoke !



Photo provided by the LTC Hal Birch

Popping smoke was a daily occurrence in the field, used every time a chopper came in, and also to mark friendly positions during a battle. They were a vital part of every grunts gear. The four primary colors used were Red, Yellow, Green and Violet. Some had affectionate names, such as ' "Goofy Grape."

And, for some odd reason, green was said to effectively shoo away swarms of bees.



After Camp Enari there was Camp Radcliff



Photo provided by the Sgt Jim Daniels

1970-Camp Camp Radcliff sported this freshly painted Red Warriors sign in front of HQ. Text displays the Red Warriors Area of Operations. Camp Enari was handed over to the RVN Army late 1969.

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DAK TO

PLEIKU PROVINCE

VC VALLEY

BUNKER HILL

ANLAO VALLEY